

economy, and founded America's first trade unions. Many of those who sought opportunity in the west migrated up the Hudson River and beyond by canal or rail.

Modern American Environmentalism

Non-profit groups and other community organizations have a long history of active involvement in the Hudson River Valley. In 1936, the Hudson River Conservation Society organized to preserve Hudson Highland scenery from destructive mines. In the 1950s, the Boscobel Restoration in Garrison rescued an 1806 mansion and initiated a new era of postwar historic preservation. In the 1960s, the battle to save Storm King Mountain led to the organization of Scenic Hudson and a precedent-setting court decision that was the cornerstone of the National Environmental Policy Act. Since then, Hudson River Valley environmental organizations, working with the State and local governments, have led a monumental campaign to restore and protect the Hudson. Today, more than 400 environmental groups, sportsmen's organizations, historic societies and a myriad of other non-profit organizations attest to the extent of local commitment to conserving the quality of life and regional heritage that make the Hudson River Valley unique.

II. THE COMMUNITY'S PLAN OF ACTION

A. New York's Vision of the Hudson River

For generations, New Yorkers have cried out for State and Federal action to protect and restore the Hudson River. New York State has heard their demands and has adopted a comprehensive program to guide State management of the river. Designation of the Hudson as an American Heritage River would further those efforts by effectively coordinating State, Federal and local programs to remove pollutants, restore degraded wetlands, protect fragile habitats, revitalize community waterfronts, protect and rehabilitate historic structures, stimulate cultural activity and provide public access to one of America's greatest natural resources.

New York has embarked on a visionary effort to integrate environmental restoration and economic revitalization in the Hudson River Valley; Federal assistance could provide a critical helping hand in many areas of this initiative.

For years, New York State had no plan to

guide efforts to protect the river, and no funds dedicated for that purpose. Governor Pataki has made revitalization of the Hudson River a top priority for his administration, and has provided the funds and the plans to make restoration of the river a reality.

In 1996, Governor Pataki signed the Hudson River Estuary Management Plan, a comprehensive blueprint for the long-term protection and restoration of the river and its entire ecosystem from New York Harbor to the Troy dam.

Governor Pataki has committed \$37 million to implementing the Management Plan, as well as an additional \$38 million for water quality projects affecting the Hudson River Estuary as part of New York's efforts to clean up New York Harbor. In total, \$75 million in State funds have been dedicated for the restoration and protection of the Hudson River ecosystem. In addition, \$200 million in State and City funding has been committed to the creation of the Hudson River Park in New York City.

New York's plan of action derives from the people and local governments of the Hudson River Valley. It reflects the programs the citizens of New York have directed the State to create, the ways in which they have elected to work together with each other and with the private sector, and the enormous strides they have made in reclaiming their river. Designation of the Hudson as an American Heritage River would complement these efforts by providing Federal assistance with voluntary, non-regulatory programs that will help restore the river and revitalize the economy of the valley while respecting private property rights and working in cooperation with local governments and non-profit organizations.

The American Heritage Rivers Initiative will help restore the Hudson River to its full, undiminished glory.

Upon designation, Governor Pataki will assemble a task force from involved private citizens, organized interest groups, and regional businesses, as well as local, State and Federal agencies. Through this task force New York will work to accomplish its objectives for the Hudson River.

B. Prior Accomplishments and Existing Plans and Projects

New York State is devoting unprecedented

resources to the Hudson River today. Important progress has been made already, and in the next few years the pace of work will accelerate dramatically. Among New York's many environmental priorities, none are more important, and none are receiving more attention.

New York State's efforts to restore and protect the Hudson River are guided by the Hudson River Estuary Management Plan, a comprehensive blueprint for the protection and renewal of the river and its ecosystem. Governor Pataki signed the Management Plan in spring 1996 and has provided more than \$37 million for its implementation.

The estuary plan is the State's first initiative to integrate all of its programs in support of a distinct ecological area. It addresses:

- managing aquatic resources, such as sturgeon, striped bass, shad, eels and blue crabs, and restoring their habitats;
- preserving upland resources, such as open space, scenery and biodiversity;
- enhancing water-based recreation and tourism;
- revitalizing the river-based economy through improved water quality and remediation of contaminants; and
- stewardship through partnership as an organizing principle.

The scope of the work New York State has undertaken in the Hudson River Valley through the Estuary Management Plan is truly astonishing. Work is underway on many projects, and in the near future the pace of work will accelerate rapidly as implementation of the Management Plan continues.

Guided by the Hudson River Estuary Management Plan, and funded by the 1996 Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act and the State Environmental Protection Fund, New York State is:

- Restoring the river's habitats, revitalizing degraded industrial waterfronts through brown-fields clean-ups and redevelopment, repairing boat launches and restoring the vitality of the entire ecosystem.
- Buying environmentally sensitive land, restoring wetlands, monitoring fishery resources



and investigating the sources of contamination in the river.

- Conducting a three-year study of the River's shad populations, the first since 1951.

• Implementing 12 new projects to monitor and evaluate contaminants in the Hudson River. A comprehensive monitoring plan for the river is being developed. Approximately 30 projects will be under way by 1998.

• Digitally mapping the Hudson River's tidal wetlands and identifying the Hudson's submerged habitats and nursery areas in need of protection.

• Pursuing Governor Pataki's commitment to protecting 4,000 acres of open space along the Hudson River. Significant progress has been made with the purchase of 1,145 acres of land on Fishkill Ridge in Dutchess County, and Turkey Point and Eve's Point in Ulster County.

• Building and repairing eight boat launches on the Hudson. Five such projects are already underway, in Bethlehem, Newburgh, Athens, Peekskill, and Mills-Norrie State Park. A comprehensive assessment of the river's access points and potential sites for future developments is being conducted.

• Beginning work on a project to develop five new interpretive centers which will help encourage natural resource based tourism. A respected interpretive planner has been hired to design a plan for a network of centers featuring the natural history and human uses of the estuary.

Other, complementary initiatives also are making important progress towards the protection of the Hudson River.

In the lower Hudson Valley, an intensive public process led to the creation of the Hudson River Valley Greenway, a structure of voluntary regional cooperation, based on the principle of Home Rule, economic incentives and connection of the Valley's resources through hiking, biking and water trails. Through the Greenway, communities agree to adopt common planning principles: natural and cultural resource protection; economic development; public access and heritage and environmental education. The Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail System will connect the valley's residents with its natural, cultural and historic resources.

Congress recognized the unique qualities of the Hudson River Valley in 1996 when it designated it a National Heritage Area. The National Park Service, in conjunction with the State of New York through the Hudson River Greenway, is working to focus funds and resources on helping to protect, develop and interpret the history, culture and environment of the Hudson River Valley.

The designation also recognizes the commitments of the 58 Hudson River communities who have voluntarily chosen to participate either in Coastal Management or Greenway planning, including the entire Westchester County shoreline, which has organized as a separate non-profit organization to promote economic development, historic and cultural preservation, river access and community planning. Dutchess County has become the first county in New York State to create a sustainable development plan.

More than 3,000 farms in the Hudson River Valley have chosen to participate in New York

State's Agricultural District program, which will preserve 870,000 acres of agricultural land.

New York State, through its Environmental Protection Fund and the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act, the Estuary Management Plan, Coastal Management Program and the Hudson River Valley Greenway is working as a partner with local communities in revitalization and preservation efforts.

For example, this past spring, work on the first "brownfields" project to be funded from the Bond Act, the transformation of a blighted industrial site into a riverfront park in Irvington, was begun. This project is an example of the close partnerships that have developed in New York to the benefit of the Hudson River. The design was a joint effort between the Village of Irvington and Scenic Hudson, while the majority of the financing is supplied by the State.

The Hudson Valley Tourism Development Council, representing both the public and private sectors, is supplementing both the work of the State's newly revived *I Love New York* campaign and also the Greenway planning and trail process in the valley's communities. Eight designated Heritage Areas, each with its own community driven plan and visitor's center, provide stepping stones for visitors traveling in the Hudson River Valley.

C. Expected Federal Role: Projects To Be Undertaken

Although many State-local partnerships exist along the Hudson River, Federal agencies could be better integrated into these initiatives. The most direct benefit of American Heritage River designation would be the new and enhanced relationships that the Federal government would forge with New York State, local governments, non-profit and other community organizations in support of several existing management plans and programs.

In general, New York sees designation of the Hudson as an American Heritage River as an opportunity to:

1. Integrate the Federal government as a partner in recent State and local initiatives.
2. Focus and integrate Federal programs among themselves.
3. Provide technical assistance to the myriad project and programs described below.
4. Trouble-shoot where integration and tech

